Christian Courier

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'Seeker services' catch on with CRC home missionaries

So far numbers lower in Canada than in U.S.

Irene Bom

LONDON, Ont. — After three years of promotion, a regional director of Christian Reformed Home Missions says that "the answer is not totally in yet" as to whether or not the Willow Creek "seeker sensitive" worship style is "the way to go" for Canadian churches.

"So far these new churches are attracting lower numbers of people than in the U.S.," notes John Van Til of London, Ont.

Pioneered by Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, the services generally include drama and contemporary music, place few demands on worshippers, and feature issues-oriented sermons. Such churches are called "seeker sensitive" because the Sunday morning service is designed to be an outreach to people who would not normally be in church. (Small groups meet during the week for more in-depth Bible study.)

For the past three years Home Missions has helped to send teams of up to six people from fledgling congregations to an annual October conference at Willow Creek. Van Til stresses that the intent was not to carbon copy that congregation, but to let people experience a church whose ministry reaches beyond believers in the pews, or at best unbelievers in the pews. He suggests that the reason for the lower success rate for seeker sensitive services in Canadian settings may be that "there is a greater openness to church in the U.S."

Seeker range

Canadian CRC home missionaries say they use the model to varying degrees as they locate themselves on the spectrum from "seeker friendly" to "super seeker."

Tim Berends, head of Winnipeg's six-year-old Good News Fellowship, says that he's had to trim some edges to make the model work in a Canadian context. "We did not find that people here were attracted by innovation and change," he says.

"The highest values in the

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PHOTO: PETER PAETKAU

Michele Visser dramatizes "The Masks We Wear" during a "Sunday Night Out" for teens, part of Good News Fellowship in Winnipeg.

Colombia leads the world in political killings

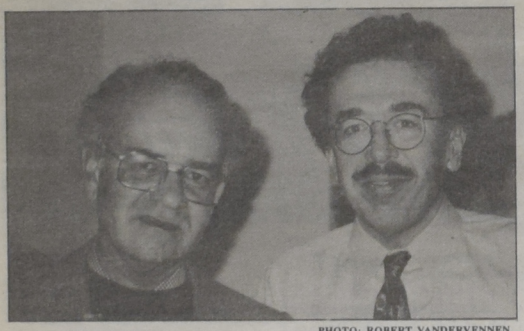

PHOTO: ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Father Javier Giraldo of Colombia with Bill Fairbairn, director of ICCHRLA

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Last year about 30,000 people were killed in Colombia. That about equals homicides in the United States, a much larger nation.

Colombia is a world leader in political killings, says Father Javier Giraldo. He spoke at a recent briefing for the Interchurch Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA). Giraldo is director of Colombia's Inter-congregational Commission on Justice and Peace.

The commission was organized in 1988 by 25 Catholic religious communities. Its task is to document the story of the killings and torture in Colombia, so their own people and the world will know the violence and agony in the land. The commission has registered over 20,000 abuses of the right to life in the past six years.

A great many of these killings are motivated by political events, says Giraldo. There is much "social killing": the government decides street children, beggars, drug addicts, prostitutes and homosexual people are undesirable, so the police kill them. About 1,000 people were killed last year in armed conflict between the government and rebel guerrillas, and 120 to 130 simply disappeared at gunpoint.

Another 4,000 people died "obscure deaths" in 1993. Their bodies are found in the

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'Seeker' services not just an alternative

Missionary pastors say outreach is more than a song and dance

Irene Bom

SURREY, B.C. — At first glance the seeker services of many Christian Reformed Home Missions churches — often featuring drama and contemporary styles of music — might not seem all that different from services in other alternative CRCs.

But several pastors of outreach churches say the difference starts to show in the amount of attention paid to liturgy relative to new attitudes and habits.

"Many Christian Reformed people say they want an outreach church, but what they really want is an ethnic CRC that has alternative worship services," says Tim Berends, pastor of Good News Fellowship in Winnipeg.

He adds that such congregations "talk about reaching the lost but only end up growing from local CRC people who are bored in their own churches." (His services are not open to members of other local churches unless their council approves of them worshipping elsewhere.)

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Winnipeg locals were 'suspicious' of new services

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U.S. are creativity and imagination, but here in Canada, the highest ones seem to be reliability and dependability. We thought people would flock to innovative services, but instead they were suspicious," says Berends.

Sunday at Good News Fellowship begins with a 9:30 a.m. "Morningsong" for the growing believer, with expository preaching and prayer. At 11 a.m. there is a service geared to seekers. Berends then preaches sermons that concentrate "more, but not totally" on topics such as marriage and family.

Asking questions

Six months ago Rob Hoogendoorn began leading services at Forest City Community Church in London, Ont., after dialing 11,000 local phone numbers. Now 75 people regularly attend the Sunday services that he describes as "seeker focused."

The first half hour involves drama and song presentations or sometimes videos "that open people up to the message by asking the questions about life that many people are asking."

Hoogendoorn says his message differs from ones in traditional churches because he can't assume that people in the pews accept the Bible as the final authority, so he must start with a theme and then explain why the Bible says what it says.

Hard topics

But he claims that such an approach does not make him shy away from hard and potentially offensive topics like the Trinity and sin. "I don't see any of that being threatened," he says.

For Evert Busink, pastor of First CRC in Brandon, Man., being seeker sensitive means "not using words like sanctification and justification in the morning service."

He dismisses as "hypocritical" criticisms that such outreach strategies are too focused on numbers: "Christ says he counts his own sheep. There's nothing wrong with keeping track if you're trying to find out what is effective."

PHOTO: PETER PAETKAU

A pizza bash at Good News Fellowship in Winnipeg drew many teens from a major high school four blocks away.

While Berends appreciates the attempt by Willow Creek to make services culturally relevant, he says that method's tendency toward entertainment is an "ongoing struggle" for him.

"I sometimes think that if we would have a highly liturgical church that is also highly relational, it would be just as successful in Canada," he says.

Discipling takes tears

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"Alternative churches want to reach out, but they start by designing the liturgy that they want and think that others will be more likely to come. In reality we don't know unchurched people well enough to know what they want," says Steve Elzinga, pastor of Hope Community Church in Surrey, B.C. His congregation hopes to avoid that mistake in a new church planting effort in Chilliwack, B.C., by first inviting unbelievers to small house groups. "We're not even going to think about liturgy or services until half of our groups are new converts," says Elzinga.

Both say the difference in attitude shows up when seekers need to be discipled.

"We take believers off the street and we want to 'study' them. We want immediately to give them the whole system we've grown up with. But what they need instead are people to walk beside them and disciple them like Jesus did," says Elzinga, adding that Hope Community is considering assigning a sponsor to each new member.

"Many church people are outgoing and friendly, but they don't cross a certain line. When it comes to the birthday parties and camping trips, it's the old gang that gets together again," says Elzinga.

Berends says that in his experience, church members accept newcomers but are reluctant to elect them as elders and deacons.

Adds Evert Busink, who stresses friendship evangelism in his congregation in Brandon, Man., "Programs are easy because they don't require us to change our lifestyle. But are we willing to get out and make new friends?"

PHOTO: COURTESY HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Puppet show time at Hope Community in Surrey, B.C.

No duty

Elzinga says he cancelled the Wednesday evening believer's service after two years because new converts weren't coming, but he maintains that doesn't show a lack of commitment. "A new member has no duty to hook into. They may do less, but you know that anything they do is prompted by true desire."

According to Elzinga, other problems can surface with the "10 per cent or so" of most congregations that are committed to outreach. "They're used to being at the top in terms of being active in their other churches, so they come and still think of themselves that way — as the strong teacher. But that is controlling and only creates dependents."

To make real disciples, he says, "I've got to show that I'm just as broken as the person I'm trying to help, because God uses weakness. I've got to show some tears."

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News

Is worship for evangelizing?

PHOTO: COURTESY HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Worshippers outside Hope Community Church in Surrey, B.C.: coming for milk or meat?

Irene Bom

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Do Sunday seeker services mean a redefinition of what worship is?

That question flags objections to current Home Missions strategies voiced by Calvin Theological Seminary professor John Bolt.

"My own conviction is that a worship service is not in the first place an evangelistic tool," he says.

In an article on worship and evangelism in the *Calvin Theological Journal* two years ago, Bolt states that "when some people say, 'I would never take anyone to our church in order to interest them in the Christian faith,' they may be right. Interesting people in the faith is not the task of worship but of Christians equipped through worship. Worship is not designed to win converts, but to strengthen the converted."

Time change

Rob Hoogendoorn, pastor of Forest City Community Church in London, Ont., maintains that the meaning of worship has not changed, but only the time and location. "Believers now meet in home groups during the week. We chose to reach out on Sunday instead of a weeknight so that we could latch onto people's experiences of church when they were young."

Winnipeg missionary pastor Tim Berends admits the new target for Sunday services has its rough spots: "How can you supervise the Lord's Supper when a church is packed with seekers?"

Bolt said in an interview last week that he's concerned that the "meat" of the gospel won't be served in services designed to hook seekers.

Steve Elzinga, CRC home missionary based in Surrey, B.C., disagrees. "If I just give seekers the warm fuzzies, they're not going to come back. If anything, church members gravitate toward 'milk.'" When church people complain they're not being fed, he tells them, "'You're surrounded by food, but you're not hungry, probably because you're not working. And how much food are you expecting to get in one half hour sermon a week?'"

But Bolt says churches cannot ignore the identity shift that a seeker focus brings to worship. "I don't understand why we have to change our Sunday worship, unless it is that the unchurched are turned off by it," he says.

"Then the question comes, what is turning them off? That a congregation is not what it ought to be, or that visitors are not getting what they think they need? If we change our style for the latter, we're filling their perceived needs but not their real needs."

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Guest Editorial

Caring for the earth — a Christian responsibility

Maria Stam

For more than 20 years cultural historian Thomas Berry of the Riverdale Centre of Religious Studies, New York, has talked and written about the alterations in the ecosystem caused by our irresponsible treatment of the earth. He and other scientists, like David Suzuki, have made us aware of the degraded condition of the air, the water and the soil.

We cannot deny that we are informed about dying forests, polluted rivers, lakes and the consequences of deforestation. But except for some recycling and reducing we still seem to continue in our old ways.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore writes in his book *Earth in the Balance* (1993) that a total change of attitude is necessary to save the planet. As Thomas Berry expresses it in *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology* (1987): "The earth can exist without us. We cannot exist without the earth. In the design of nature there exists a mutually enhancing relationship."

To preserve and restore God's creation is not just a matter to be dealt with by governments alone, but each of us has to take on a personal responsibility in caring for the earth. What we need is a renewed and profound respect for all creation, together with a greater appreciation of our privileged position on the planet.

There is a close connection between thankfulness for our daily bread and our concern for the earth. We often take the availability of food for granted, which is partly to blame on the way it is distributed and marketed.

When independent bakers, butchers and vegetable growers were replaced by grocery chains and supermarkets, we were cut off from the natural source. Plastic wrapped products do not relate us to the labor of farmers or the craftmanship and skills of bakers and butchers. Food has become a product of industry and as such a commodity on the world market to be manipulated for profit's sake.

Our affluence makes us responsible

When we appreciate our daily bread we will be less wasteful and become more understanding and compassionate for the poor and hungry in the world. It also may awaken our social consciousness to the fact that we in the Western hemisphere still use the greater portion of the earth's resources.

Forty years ago, when manufacturers directed their production toward disposable household articles, we quickly adopted a throw-away style. Of course, at that time we were not yet aware of the consequences of our wastefulness. After decades of over-consumption we finally realize that the earth's resources are limited and that nature fights back when exploited.

We can no longer consider it a voluntary act to consume less: we have to look at it as our duty. The very fact that it has become a necessity to change our consumer habits is the consequence of our affluence. The poor in the world have little to reduce, as they depend on the superfluity of the rich for their survival.

Social injustice via the environment

Throughout the world a link between social justice and the degrading of the environment can be observed. Toxic dumps are often located in poorer neighborhoods. Big city slums with their inadequate sewer and water supply systems are not only damaging the health of the people living there, but also the environment. There is usually a greater concentration of housing for low income families in industrial sections where air pollution is more severe than in other areas of a city.

The deforestation of the rainforest in Brazil is destroying the livelihood and culture of the indigenous people. Neglect and harmful actions by irresponsible governments have caused environmental accidents and endangered the health of people as experienced under the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and China, resulting in the Chernobyl and Yangtze River disasters. In our own backyard overfishing by the powerful on the East Coast has left many workers with unemployment and an uncertain future.

Reliance on possessions

As Christians we have to become more critical of the degradation of the environment. In the past we relied too much on the economy and less on our own strength and spiritual resources. Today, recession and unemployment may force us to look for alternatives and perhaps for a new meaning of happiness which is not based on possessions, but on an internal freedom from ownership, prestige and power. When hard times can compel us to reduce consumption, can we not do the same for our planet (the only one we have)?

In the last decade an enormous number of papers and books, dealing with the ecology have been published, but all theoretical debates cannot restore the earth unless we practise them in our daily lives. For too long we thought that science and technology could help us to adapt to any new situation. But technological progress and consumerism as a panacea for social and economic ills loses its validity in view of the degradation of the environment.

A life liberated from a possessive attitude sets us free to become better stewards of the earth. Our caring and concern for the earth should have a spiritual base, expressed first of all in gratitude toward the Lord for "he has performed marvels" (Psalm 98).

Since gratitude always implies a commitment toward the giver, we are obliged to participate in the restoration and sustaining of the earth.

Maria Stam is a published author of poetry, a historical novel and many articles. She lives in London, Ont.

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Letter

Emphasizing school image has nothing to do with Mickey Mouse

After a number of letters critical of the call, by myself and others, to improve the image of OACS high schools, CC's editor has offered me the opportunity to respond. I have appreciated the reaction that professional marketing and school uniforms should not be proposed as even a partial substitute for obedience, Christian service and Reformed perspective. I would not wish anyone to have such a misperception of my views.

Rather than reacting to all the specific points raised in the letters, let me try to put my recommendations about a high school dress code in context. The original article — from which the CC interview originated — emphasized that the Christian education offered in OACS high schools is sorely needed by our society because of its strengths: its fundamental Christian confession, the Reformed depth that relates this confession to curriculum, its healthy academic focus, its well-qualified teachers, its developing attention to Christian piety, its eagerness to witness and interact with our society, and its broad commitment to both intellectually gifted students and to those with learning exceptionalities.

A second basic point was that most Protestant Christians do not realize this and often see our schools as "Dutch schools," dominated by the Christian Reformed Church, somewhat isolated from society, and casual or even untidy in our outward appearance.

Because I feel that image should reflect what we aspire to be, I made eight modest proposals:

1. The main stress should continue to be on a full-bodied, quality Christian education rather than any watered-down substitute.

2. We should promote the high academic standards that OACS schools already have.

3. Subject to community approval, we should move to jacket-and-tie formality on the part of the teachers and school uniforms for students. In the public mind this would more readily identify the schools with the idea of excellence, religion and normativity. It would make us look more like the Roman Catholic Separate Schools than the public schools.

4. We should try to select teachers that not only share the Reformed vision of the school but also represent more than one denomination.

5. The school should stress Christian behavior, piety and good school discipline, and the required credit program in Bible should be publicized.

6. Principals, teachers and students should be encouraged to get involved with the community beyond the fellowship provided by their church.

7. A one-year introductory tuition rate for all first-year families should be considered.

8. Regular advertising should emphasize academic excellence, school atmosphere, Bible knowledge and Christian moral standards.

The point of these proposals is the opposite of a phoney advertising campaign to increase numbers, but is a matter of outreach and an educational witness, to promote the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John Vriend
St. Catharines, Ont.

Guest Editorial

What can we do about tragedy in Latin America?

There is a depressing similarity to stories about life in most Latin American nations. Only the details vary from country to country.

National power is in the hands of the rich elite, who own businesses and vast tracts of farmland. That elite also runs the government, which is usually democratically elected because the elites are often divided into two or more opposing camps.

But most of the power is in the hands of the army and police, who work hand in glove with the government to control the masses. And if the "enforcers" are more ruthless and violent than the government wants, there is not much the government can say. The court system is not effective because judges can easily be shot.

These nations are poor and taxes are high. Very few people have a chance to improve their lot. Those in power permit paramilitary groups to terrorize the people, inflicting torture and death without fear of being punished.

Some rebellious types join together to fight the system, and in the days of the Cold War they were helped by communist governments. It may be that the "rebels" themselves adopt communist ideas, since these ideas were developed precisely to help the poor and oppressed. So there are constant battles between the government and the rebellious guerrillas.

Western democracies enjoy the cheap foods and manufactured goods of these countries. They like stable governments whose business leaders want free enterprise and look the other way at the suffering of the masses.

What can we in Canada do about this? Not a great deal. The problems arise within the nations themselves. A whole culture has gone wrong. Perhaps the best we can do is to offer Band-Aids.

But we can also listen to the cries of the people, especially when Christians cry to Christians in other lands. The injustice Latin Americans suffer needs public airing so that it will not stay secret and so that international pressure can be put on unjust governments.

We can accept refugees too. We can pressure our governments to pressure the oppressive governments. Our church ministries can be active in those countries and in small ways help the people find a better life.

And we can pray for them and weep with them.

Robert VanderVennen

A bit of CC patriotism is not unwelcome

Bert Witvoet

We were discussing in the CC office whether *Christian Courier* is a cause or just a paper one does or does not subscribe to.

What is the difference? you may ask.

If it's a cause you tend to look upon CC as something that either deserves or does not deserve your support. Your primary question is always, of course, will I get something out of it? But it's not the only question for you. You also wonder: What good does this paper do for the bigger picture of journalism and the Reformed community?

If, however, CC is just a consumer item for you, you might be tempted to let your subscription slide because, well, there are so many other things you can benefit from.

Here at our office we subscribe to the *Globe and Mail* as well as to several other magazines. We do that to stay in touch with what goes on in the world. But the *Globe and Mail* is not a cause we support because we believe in its mission. It's a consumer item for us. However, if it ever came to a time when the *Globe* was the only Canadian newspaper left in the country, it might become a cause. We might support it for the sake of protecting our Canadian identity.

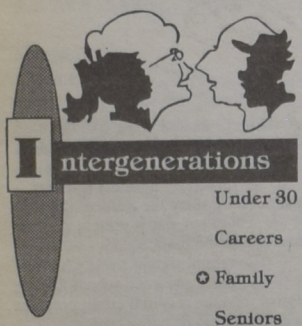
As soon as something becomes a cause, you start thinking in terms of loyalty and solidarity. Of course, even then, it has to have intrinsic value for you to support it. But you don't judge it only on whether or not you get personal benefits from it.

The *Christian Courier* is fortunately a cause for many people. It certainly feels like a cause to us who are committed to working for it. We see it as a vehicle for informing the Reformed and reforming the informed.

Cute, but what does that mean?

It means that we give Reformed people in North America an opportunity to find out about each other and about what's happening in other parts of the kingdom. And it means that we call on our readers to continually reshape their thinking and remodel their living in line with God's Word.

It is with the idea of "cause" in mind that we ask Reformed North Americans to rally behind CC and to support our CC spring campaign.



Loving your neighbors

Marian den Boer

You could see the snow visibly melt under the powerful rays of the sun, but the kids of the neighborhood didn't have time to consider snow. They had to be running, jumping, climbing, crawling — constantly moving. Each child contrived his own ritual in celebration of this first warm, spring day.

My son, 11-year-old Paul, whacked at various parts of the house with his hockey stick.

"Paul stop beating up the house," I said. "It's not ours anymore." (We had recently sold our home.)

Six-year-old Jason from next door twisted his hockey stick blade down into the middle of our front lawn.

"Jason, stop digging up the grass."

"What grass? It's mud."

"Well, stop doing that," I said between clenched teeth. I watched him wipe the muddy blade up against a maple tree where no doubt the next kid would be leaning, if only for a second.

"Get off that little trike!" I hollered at my nine-year-old daughter, Michelle, who was sitting on the brand new tricycle that belonged to a two-year-old neighbor.

"I don't have all my weight on it," she said innocently.

"Off!" I commanded.

Retraining

I zeroed in on Jack pulling Paul up the street in the wagon: "Guys, guys don't treat the wagon that way. You'll break the axles."

"What way?"

"Twisting it up and down the curbs like that."

They shrugged their shoulders and abandoned the wagon.

"Michelle," I nagged on, "don't roller skate through puddles. Your wheels will get rusty."

"Oh?" she said, looking puzzled.

I walked over to my neighbor who was standing on his driveway, barbecuing pork chops.

"You know," I said, "every spring it's the same. You have to retrain the kids. They don't seem to remember anything. You have to tell them not to beat up the house or dig up the lawn or rust up their roller skates or...."

"Marian," he interrupted sympathetically, "are you having a hard day?"

Good neighbors, without fences

I was amazed at his perception.

"Am I having a hard day? Let me tell you about my day...." I told him how I had flooded the basement doing a load of laundry. Someone (probably me) had left a rag in the laundry tub so the soapy, washing-machine water filled up the tub and spilled over onto the floor and into the office.

I had spent a good part of my morning lifting the office carpet which meant moving a heavy oak desk and pulling apart a packed, four-drawer file cabinet. I mistakenly lifted the second drawer of the cabinet by the file hanger apparatus and spend the next 20 minutes sorting out my husband Marty's T-to-Z clients.

My neighbor listened to my woes or at least some of them. I spared him details about my achy neck, my interrupted devotions and my money argument with Marty at breakfast.

I did tell him that after months of shopping for a bigger home in an affordable price range, we finally found one; but I was having qualms: I didn't want to trade neighborhoods. That's what was really bothering me.

I don't remember exactly what my neighbor said, but pretty soon I was laughing at myself.

It's easy to love your neighbors when you have nice ones.

Marian den Boer lives with her husband, five children and wonderful neighbors in Hamilton, Ont.

Media describes drug traffic but ignores military shootings

...continued from p. 1

Another 4,000 people died "obscure deaths" in 1993. Their bodies are found in the garbage or in mass graves where they cannot be identified. By finding signs of torture and by noting where they are found, it is possible to say whether they died from social cleansing or other political reasons.

Violence has grown

Violence grew to this high level only since the 1970s. The government has admitted to religious communities that it began to be embarrassed about its large number of political prisoners. So it decided to kill off those it would otherwise have put in jail. It did this by allowing paramilitary groups to arise secretly. These are civilians who follow the lead of the army and police, carrying out violence the army and police can't legally do. They operate with the silent consent of the government.

One model is for a paramilitary group to put pressure on villagers to buy guns and form "self-defence" groups. They are given the alternatives of doing this, or leaving the region or waiting for their death. About 200 people have chosen the third option, says Giraldo. But most people flee, and many are now clandestine refugees in their own country.

Hostels created

Since 1989 the commission has tried to create hostels for these people. Their first hostel was in a very violent part of Colombia. During the first two weeks it was open they received many threats, and the refugees formed self-protection groups at night. Later the hostel was machine-gunned for two nights. People who had no connection to the hostel were killed in front of it.

Another time someone under suspicious circumstances wanted to come inside, but under pressure she confessed that she was seeking information for the paramilitary. Two days later her dead body was found. So they closed the hostel. It was re-opened again in May 1993, as a result of international pressure. But hostels are only a very small solution to a huge problem, says Giraldo.

The sad fact is that people who do these killings are often identified but are rarely punished. One study showed that only 10 per cent of those identified are investigated, and of those cases only one in five is ever completed. Of those completed, 56 per cent are set free. Most of the military people have a right to trial by military judges, which almost always find the accused innocent.

News coverup

Why do we hear nothing about this kind of violence in Colombia but only about drug trafficking, asks Giraldo. For example, on Jan. 30, 1993, a car bomb went off in central Bogota and killed 30 people. The whole world knew about this within minutes. But during the same month there were 134 political assassinations and 16 disappearances, and never a word was heard. The international image of Colombia is drawn up inside the country, says Giraldo.

The Colombia media are "nefarious," agrees a Colombian journalist who worked for the nation's largest newspaper but is now living in Canada. The media get into trouble if they say something against the armed forces. Since 1979, 109 journalists have been killed, and about 150 others fled the country after threats.

The Canadian government looks the other way, says Bill Fairbairn, director of ICCHRLA, who visited Colombia twice last year. He says Canada is afraid that trade with Colombia might be jeopardized with too much complaint about human rights.

Last week the Canadian government made its annual presentation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission but said not a word about Colombia, Fairbairn notes.

Canada is also supporting Colombia's president Gaviria to become the new leader of the Organization of American States because of Gaviria's economic policies, he adds.

See related story on page 13...

Peter and Marja can be found on page 13

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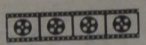
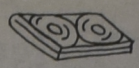
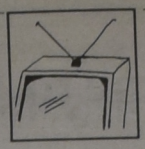
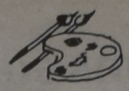

How Christian faith helped topple the USSR

***Candles Behind the Wall: Heroes of the Peaceful Revolution that Shattered Communism**, by Barbara von der Heydt. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993. Hardcover, 266 pp. U.S. $19.99. ISBN 0-8028-3722-0. Reviewed by Adrian A. Helleman, who witnessed a peaceful revolution in the Philippines in 1986.*

How does one explain the collapse of communism? Commentators have focused almost exclusively on the conventional analyses: economics and politics. But Barbara von der Heydt, an American journalist living in Germany, points out some neglected aspects of the collapse. This was a moral and spiritual revolution in which Christians played a key role.

Von der Heydt narrates the stories of many courageous people who resisted communism. Because of their faith they made costly decisions which affected not only them personally but also their families. Even the resisters who were not Christians helped to wage this revolution, but these stories are especially about believers.

Based on personal interviews with many of these people, von der Heydt records how an East German border guard urged his fellow soldiers not to shoot at those who were attempting to cross the Berlin Wall into the West. For this he was arrested and imprisoned. After his release, he discovered that the government had convinced his wife to divorce him, which was a common tactic in Eastern Bloc countries. He was imprisoned a second time and threatened with death on many occasions. His faith helped him survive.

The author also tells the stories of many Russian believers. One man was imprisoned for nine years, was divorced by his wife and alienated from his son through the efforts of the government. He is convinced, however, that the battle against communism is not yet over. In fact, he now fears for the future of his country.

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Protestant churches in Russia have faced the issue of registering with the government and sacrificing their integrity, or ignoring the laws and risk being suspended and having the churches closed. The dilemma existed on the individual level as well. Von der Heydt comments that it is difficult for people in the West to appreciate the complexity of the decisions which were made. Some Russians sacrificed everything, including their lives; others did register, but defied the laws in practice. The price they all paid is spiritually potent.

Several influential people in Russia and elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc have openly declared their faith. Throughout these countries there was a growing resistance. In East Germany, people organized prayers for peace. The prayers of these people were answered, the government toppled without violence. This reminded me vividly of the Philippines, where prayer also prepared the way for the revolution. But Germany did not experience a religious revolution. The author comments that the churches were as empty as before after a few months.

Epilogue worth the price of book

The author also documents examples of the repentance and forgiveness which were necessary when the names of those who had collaborated with the communist regimes were revealed. These are stories which deserve to be told, and I am grateful that she has recorded some of them. Particularly touching is the story of an East German pastor and his wife who opened their home to Erich Honecker, the ousted leader of the country, when no one else would.

Her epilogue alone, however, is worth the praise of this book. She quotes the observation made by a young woman from East Germany: "We know now that the god of Marxism was a false god. But we don't want to worship at the golden calf of the West either." The author then concludes: "To believe that the West holds the keys to the spiritual salvation of the East is to embrace an illusion. The spiritual heritage that shaped Western civilization as we know it has been consumed, spent, exhausted.... Precisely at the time when the West is preaching capitalism and democracy to the East, few in the West espouse the spiritual values that make their practice fruitful."

She dismisses the transfer of material wealth from West to East and Western attempts to provide "spiritual aid" as equally flawed. Materially, most people in the East are worse off now. And many church workers from the West are insensitive to the needs of those in the East. She discerns, instead, another transfer, the transfer of spiritual riches, acquired by believers in the East, to the West, where few are aware of their own spiritual poverty.

Von der Heydt reveals her journalistic skills in the way she tells these stories. I was inclined at first to dismiss her account as simplistic, until I read her epilogue. Then I realized the message she was conveying. While I might not always agree with the language that she uses, she has something very important to say and she says it well.

Her account is flawed, however, when she restricts the spiritual riches of the East to those acquired through these years of persecution. There is more spiritual wealth in the East than that. The Christian church has existed in these countries for centuries, and even a millennium in some cases. Yet she does describe some real spiritual wealth, and for that I heartily recommend this book.

Study finds U.S. TV networks ignore or scorn religion

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (EP) — How do U.S. television networks cover religion? Not well, when they cover it at all, according to a new study by the Media Research Center (MRC).

MRC researchers Tim Graham and Steve Kaminski studied all evening, morning and magazine news stories on religion and social issues in 1993. Their study found:

* TV stories on religion are numerically insignificant. Of the many thousands of stories on network evening news only 212 focused on religion; of morning news stories, only 197 covered religion; and magazine show segments, including the Sunday morning talk shows, numbered only 18.

* Stories on abortion focused heavily on the "abortion rights" agenda, with the emphasis on the violence of religious anti-abortion protesters as the only story. There were no stories on the violence of abortion in America. In 1993, 150 network news stories focused on violence or harassment against abortionists or abortion clinics. Only one acknowledged the violence of abortion — in a story on Bosnia.

* Homosexuality received nearly twice as much coverage as religion, and stories on gay issues focused heavily on the gay agenda. There were no stories with the theme that the homosexual lifestyle is immoral. While religion drew 427 total news stories during 1993, gay issues were the primary focus of 756 stories. In non-military stories on gay rights, gay advocates outnumbered opponents by 3 to 1. While violence and intimidation of abortionists gained 150 news stories, gay violence and intimidation of opponents were never mentioned.

* Coverage of religion and controversies also showed a pattern of anti-religious bias, including coverage of clerical sex abuse, the "religious right," and polls claiming traditional values are unpopular among the religious. Most tragically, the networks did 25 stories on the unfounded allegations of sexual abuse against Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, based only on a now disavowed 17-year-old "repressed memory."

The study concluded by recommending that the networks hire religion reporters; hire religious people as reporters; present the social positions of religious people fairly and without contempt; refrain from sensationalism in stories about religious authorities; and end the "good news is no news" mentality that ignores the positive role of churches in America today.

The Media Research Center also issued a study of prime-time television programs. The study found that while prime-time TV shows seldom deal with religion, on the rare occasions when shows handle matters of faith, they usually do so negatively.

The study by Thomas Johnson and Sandra L. Crawford on prime-time television's treatment of religion in 1993 found only 116 treatments of religion — an extremely small number given that well over 1,000 hours of first-run entertainment programming is broadcast annually.

NBC the worst

When characters voiced simple declarations of belief or non-belief, the portrayal was generally positive. By a margin of 63 to 22 per cent, affirmations of faith outnumbered expressions of agnosticism or atheism. However, as professions of faith become more devout, the characters espousing such beliefs were more likely to become victims of anti-religious prejudice, particularly if they were Catholic. By 68 to 18 per cent, the laity — not just casual churchgoers, but those who were shown as taking their faith seriously — were depicted negatively. Negative portrayals of the clergy dominated, 59 to 15 per cent.

SEE PAGE 14 FOR THE BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Muslims come to Christ in West Africa

SOUTH HOLLAND, Ill. (TBL) — Recognizing Muslims as the largest unevangelized people group in the world, The Bible League (formerly the World Home Bible League) based in South Holland, Ill., is focusing more of its ministry resources on largely Muslim areas, such as northern Africa and the Middle East. For the Christians of those areas, Bible League involvement provides prayer support, Scripture materials and valuable evangelistic training.

In January The Bible League held a conference in Tamale, Ghana, for Christians from all over Africa who are interested in church planting. Participants came from seven African countries — Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Most revealed that Muslim political power and opposition to the gospel is a main source of conflict.

Several of those present described how Muslim officials often bribe new Christian converts to return to Islam, offering money, wives and influential positions as an inducement to denounce the God of the Bible. New Christians find it very difficult to turn down these temptations, and if they do, beatings and torture are the next level of persuasion.

In spite of this kind of pressure from Islamic authorities, many Muslims are receptive to the Gospel message. Some are simply curious about the Bible because it has been forbidden reading in their families or communities. One young man admitted, "For many years I wanted to read the Bible, but because I grew up in a Muslim society I could not find one." Others consider the Bible a holy book, much like the Koran. "I have been looking for a New Testament for years," explained another man, "As a Muslim I believe in all of God's books of revelation. The noble Koran mentions all of the prophets. I want to read God's other holy books, and I am wondering how I can find the truth."

Upon reading the Scriptures, many Muslims are guided by the Holy Spirit to convert to Christianity. One new Christian testifies, "I started reading from the beginning, starting with the Gospel of Matthew, only to discover that the New Testament was written in the Middle East, and by one who lived in the region, addressing his message to Arabs. 'But that can't be,' I thought. 'Jesus is a Western person, he can't be concerned with Arabs because they are Muslims. I wonder who can answer this for me.' It is at this point that a local Christian presence, such as a church, becomes important. If a struggling Muslim can't find the answers to his questions from a Christian, he will soon turn back to his family and Islamic spiritual leaders.

Rev. Dawuda Maigari, director of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Nigeria, is familiar with this pattern. He has dedicated his life to sharing the good news of Christ with Islam's lost. At The Bible League's church planting conference in Ghana, he offered advice and encouragement to his fellow church planters. "The reward," he explained, "of introducing one Muslim to Christ is a spiritual harvest that often includes members of his family and community. It is not uncommon for a converted Muslim, once well-grounded in Christian faith, to return to his village and witness to his family and friends. That kind of witness is very strong."

The Bible League's focus on Muslim Africa began to take shape in 1992 when Rev. Magdy Fahim joined the staff as director of Middle Eastern ministries. Fahim was raised as a Christian in Egypt. He has seen Muslim persecution of Christians firsthand. He understands both the fears that Christians have of witnessing to Muslims, and the fears that Muslims have of converting to Christianity. "With Muslims," he explains, "it is the fear of losing everything — your identity. It is the question, 'If I accept Christ, who do I become?'

German Evangelical church says abortion must not become election issue

HANOVER, Germany (EP) — The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), in a statement published in late February, stated that "abortion must not be allowed to become an election issue." The opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) has welcomed the call for swift agreement by the political parties to new abortion laws.

The call comes in the midst of a series of local, state and European elections this year, culminating in a general election in October.

German abortion laws have been in a state of confusion since the unification of Germany brought the more liberal abortion laws of East Germany together with the more conservative West. The German Constitutional Court ruled last year that an earlier attempt to reconcile the two systems was unconditional.

Any new abortion law, according to the EKD, must consider both "the protection of unborn human life" and the "decision of the pregnant women herself."

According to the Ecumenical Press Service, both the governing conservative-liberal coalition and the opposition Social Democrats have drawn up their own proposals since the last attempt to reform Germany's abortion laws was ruled illegal. "In view of the huge challenges facing our community in various areas, a lengthy new controversy about the right to abortion must be avoided. The differences between the coalition parties and the SPD do not justify postponing a decision and thus making abortion an election issue," warned the EKD.

Church workers need police check

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (EP) — The Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, adopted a policy requiring police background checks for all of its new clergy, regular church volunteers and religious workers. Present employees and volunteers will be required to sign an affidavit certifying that they have never been involved with child abuse. "The purpose of this policy is to protect children in our diocese from potential abusers," Bishop James Malone explained. The policy is a response to the growing number of abuse complaints nationwide involving Catholic clergy.

See church news on page 18...

Independent South African churches growing, Reformed decline

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (EP) — Of the 25 million South Africans who call themselves Christians, the largest groups include the African Independent Churches (33 per cent), the Dutch Reformed Church (16 per cent), and the Roman Catholic Church (11 per cent). According to the newsletter of the Mission Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC), since 1970, the African Independent Churches have increased from 16 to 33 per cent, while the Dutch Reformed Church has declined slightly and the Roman Catholic Church has remained the same.

Soon most Dutch will be unchurched

GENEVA, Switzerland (EP) — A recent study projects that by the year 2020, three-quarters of the people in the Netherlands will not be church members. In 1991, 46 per cent of the Dutch belonged to a church, according to a report released in mid-February by the Social and Cultural Planning Office, a group which has been surveying religious attitudes among the Dutch since 1975. Only about 25 per cent of the Dutch were not members of a church in 1950. While church affiliation has declined, 75 per cent of Dutch people indicated that they believe in God.

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Wayne Brouwer
CHAPTER & VERSE

'...How does your garden grow?'

"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you" (James 1:21).

"Desire," said Spinoza, "is the very essence of man." There's something innate about the hungers and passions of our souls. Hunger can be a timeclock ticking inside, regulating the hours of our days with calculated precision. It is a biologic need, demanding fuel stops on our restless race. Sometimes hunger is a psychological drive, forcing us to crave chocolate when we lack love, or driving us to drink, drugs and sex.

But deeper than all of these things is the desire on which Spinoza put his finger. Hunger is our search for meaning to the drudgery and repetition of our daily activities. It's the spiritual need each person has to know that she is not alone in this giant and sometimes unkind maze of life. Hunger is what the writer of Ecclesiastes meant when he said that God has "set eternity in [our] hearts." Hunger is the pilgrimage of the soul.

In other words, the old adage is true: *You are what you eat!*

Life is a hunger which may cause us to follow the latest fad, search for the newest fulfillments, seek the richest treasure. We consume and consume until we are fed up with life, but still hunger within.

And then the Word comes to us from heaven. In part, it's a Word of judgment against us: *You are what you eat!* If you eat garbage, you become garbage! If you feast on pornography, as Ted Bundy said in his dying confessions to James Dobson, then you become filthy. If you think wealth can satisfy the cravings of your soul, you will become a calculator and a penny-pincher. If the respect of the community feeds the hunger of your psyche, you refashion yourself into a code of law and ethics, toeing the line without compassion. If another high is what it takes to get you through the stomach cramps of another day, you will shoot up, or smoke up, or pop some more, or tease yourself with illicit sex — and end up becoming a bag of used chemicals and a bottle of cheap thrills.

You are what you eat. You are hungry and the craving of your soul will be stilled. A meal will reset the alarm of your biological clock. But what are you eating for your soul?

A richer harvest

In the beauty of his simplicity, which cuts to the heart of the matter, Jesus offers himself to us: *I am the living bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.* In the symbolic nourishment of spiritual depth and richness, something satisfying begins to grow inside. We begin to find the values, visions and dreams of God himself giving shape to our lives. Something grows within us that feeds the hungers of our souls in a depth beyond depth.

"Man is one of your creatures, Lord," said Augustine, "and his instinct is to praise you. The thought of you stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you!"

This morning my daughters asked me who knows me better than anyone else in life. They suggested several possibilities: my colleagues at work, my parents, my friends. But, of course, they knew that it was their mother, my wife, who knows me best. But *how* did she know me best? That was their question. And we finally agreed that it had to be by my actions and attitudes toward her. There's a character about my life that she knows from the fruits my soul produces.

And this is certainly one thing she knows: that I am what I eat. In every dimension: physical, social, intellectual, emotional. And above all, spiritual. That seed has been planted well in my heart.

And in hers, too!

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

Mexican bishop helps to mediate agreement in Chiapas

CHIAPAS, Mexico (EP) — Nearly three months after the start of a peasant rebellion in southern Mexico, the Mexican government and Zapatista rebels in Chiapas reached agreement on a draft peace settlement following talks mediated by Roman Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia.

The Zapatista, named after Emiliano Zapata, a leader of the Mexican revolution of 1910-20, launched their rebellion Jan. 1 to coincide with the inauguration of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). More than 100 people were killed after Mexican troops drove back 2,000 people, mainly Indian peasants.

Commander Marcos, the Zapatista leader, has described NAFTA, which encompasses Mexico, Canada and the United States as a "death sentence for the ethnic minorities of Mexico." More than 80 per cent of the people of Chiapas are indigenous Mexicans who fear that the agreement will exacerbate their already precarious position.

"Unlike other revolutionaries in Latin America, the Zapatista do not want power," said Ofelia Ortega, an executive secretary of the World Council of Churches, who took part in an ecumenical visit to Chiapas just before the peace talks began.

"They want a more democratic society where there is justice and participation for the people. They want their people to be recognized as part of civil society," she said.

The draft peace agreement, which has still to be agreed to by the Zapatista's peasant supporters and by the Mexican National Assembly, would grant new rights and protection for indigenous people, make changes in the political and judicial systems of Chiapas and promote land reform and social reform.

The Chiapas agreement, predicted Ortega, "could be a catalyst for the whole of civil society in Mexico. It could encourage other indigenous groups throughout Latin America."

The talks are expected to resume later this month.

According to the Mennonite Central Committee, Ruiz is a tireless supporter of the indigenous people of Chiapas. Under his leadership, the diocese of San Cristobal has created peasant organizations and has organized programs to support more than 30,000 violently expelled from their land.

Billy Graham to meet with fellow evangelists

3,500 participants expected to attend

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (NACIE) March 29 — In keeping with his long-standing commitment to train and empower other evangelists, Billy Graham has joined with more than 40 denominations and fellowships to convene the North American Conference for Itinerant Evangelists (NACIE) to be held June 28 to July 1, 1994, in Louisville, Kentucky.

"I believe this is a crucial time in the history of North America and the world to do the work of an evangelist. NACIE 94 is a unique conference designed to equip, encourage, and strengthen us for that task," Graham says.

The conference will pull together full-time preaching itinerant evangelists, preparation personnel, people newly called into the field of preaching evangelism, and seminary and Bible school students with plans to enter evangelistic ministry.

Dr. Sterling Huston, chair for NACIE 94, asserts, "God has allowed the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to accumulate a significant amount of evangelism experience over the 43 years of ministry. With a new generation of evangelists now on the horizon, our goal is to share our experience with them."

Tom Phillips, program director for NACIE 94, said,"God has given the gift of itinerant evangelism to his church. We know of more than 3,000 itinerant evangelists here in North America. Encouraging evangelists to develop and deliver culturally relevant messages through methods that strengthen the local churches they serve, and be people of personal integrity is our real objective."

The four-day training event will be held at the Commonwealth Convention Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Billy Graham will deliver the opening address, as well as chair the plenary events. Over 100 Christian leaders and professionals will conduct workshops for attending evangelists and their spouses on specific topics evangelists say they desire input.

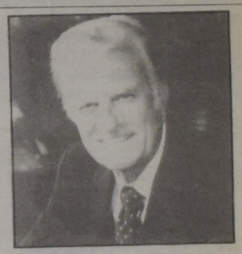

PHOTO: CC FILES

Billy Graham

Somebody knows her

PHOTO: CALL THEM CANADIANS

"The thing that really hurt Brad was the fact that this woman was no derelict."

John Mc Gowan

Sergeant Brad McCauley gave a deep sigh. Two hours to go. It had been a long shift. Biceps bulged as he scratched his thick neck.

"I don't believe it," he said to no one in particular.

It had begun nine weeks ago. On a bright sunny day an old woman, around 70, sat alone at a picnic table in a city park. Nearby, some seniors were having a gathering. Children's cries came from the wading pool, blending with the hum of the city.

Then, without a word or a cry, the old woman slumped over and fell to the grass.

"It's all in my report," Constable Dan Yates protested.

"I know that but tell it to me again."

He should have been satisfied with the written report. But somehow the case grabbed at Brad. And listening to Dan was not difficult. He was one of the new breed of police officers, more eloquent than his physical qualities would seem to indicate.

"Poor old soul." Dan let the words fall from his mouth, almost reluctantly.

Let's not get too melodramatic, Brad thought. Although truthfully, he felt the same way himself. He indulged in a brief reflection on what his own life might be like at that stage. Retirement was just two years away.

"No one saw it happen." Dan was all business now.

"I tried to identify the victim." Dan averted his eyes from Brad's steady look. But Brad understood. Sometimes police jargon had a too-harsh quality.

"Looked in her straw purse. Some keys. Religious medals. Pair of glasses, two bus tickets and about three dollars."

"Her change purse had the words Stefanskirche, Wien, stamped on it and in brackets St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna. Saw it on our last trip. Magnificent."

"But you're sure there was no ID," said Brad.

"Positive. There was a printed form from a company that doesn't exist any more. Wasn't even filled out."

"Looked in her straw purse. Some keys. Religious medals. Pair of glasses, two bus tickets and about three dollars."

The thing that really hurt Brad was the fact that this woman was no derelict. Not that he had anything against derelicts. These things happened. But this woman had a neat appearance. He'd even gone to the morgue to have a look.

Her long gray hair was tidily tucked back. She wore a plain, blue polyester dress and sensible, brown, Tender Tootsie shoes. There was a sterling silver ring on her left hand and an inexpensive, gold-colored brooch on her dress.

Brad sunk his well-tanned face into his hands. Nine weeks and not one glimmer of a lead to her identity. How could this happen? She had a pleasant face. Surely she must be someone's grandmother — or great-grandmother to some children somewhere. Somebody must know her.

Brad's shoulders heaved as he gave another sigh. Today was the day she'd be lowered into a pauper's grave. The thought hit him like a pounding headache. He wanted to yell out against the idea but there was nothing he could do.

"Hi, Sarge."

It was Dan. He must have found something by now.

"Any news for me?"

"Wish I had. I was hoping you'd have something to tell me. What happened at the dry cleaner's?"

The dry cleaner lead had come after a list of other checks. Bulletins had been issued to all of the surrounding police departments. The keys in the straw purse had been tried on the front doors of surrounding apartment buildings. All of the senior citizens homes had been contacted.

One day Brad had decided to take another look through the purse. Then he found the bill. Pressed into a tiny square it had been tucked away in a small pocket where no one had thought to look. But the writing on the bill meant nothing to Brad.

In a burst of hope he'd gone to the cleaning establishment, a half dozen blocks from the station. The manager was eager to please.

But even he couldn't make sense of the name. It had been written by a member of the family who'd since moved out west. "You leave with me. I try to reach him. Would like to help you, officer."

Brad reached for the phone. The dry cleaner's line was busy.

"I'll drop round and see him," he told Dan.

His oversize strides carrying him past everyone on the sidewalk, Brad wondered why he was doing this. It was time to slow down. There was a cottage up north waiting for him — fishing, wood carving and being with people he loved amid the beauty of nature.

But that was two years away. Brad McCauley had never been one to simply mark time. Besides, he saw an opportunity to make amends for something that had been gnawing at him for a long time.

When the letter from his mother had arrived he had carried it around in his pocket for days. He had read one sentence over and over again. It seemed to be saying goodbye forever.

Calling her had given him no satisfaction. She had simply laughed it off. Claimed there was no particular significance to the words.

He should have driven up to see her. But a six-hour drive didn't fit in with his other commitments.

Then the tornado ripped through the small, northern town.

Did his mother cry out as it happened? Or did she go silently like the old woman in the park? Brad had no idea.

All he remembered of the funeral was a kind of swimming of events before his eyes. Nothing in focus. Voices came at him as if from a long tunnel. But behind his blurred vision and frontal fuzziness was the seering realization that he had been warned and should have been able to do something about it.

There was a lineup at the cleaner's. An excitable customer was describing his effects in a high-pitched voice.

The manager sent family members scurrying along the racks of clothing while raising his eyebrows at Brad as if appealing for help.

"You go home," he said at last to the customer, "leave your phone number. No worry. I replace if I have to."

"Did you find anything my friend?" Brad asked.

"So sad," said the proprietor. "I can tell this bothers you. I explain to family little bit you tell me about this woman. Phone my cousin out west. Even mail bill to him. He send back with thousand pities. In such a hurry when he do it can't even make out own writing."

"Such a beautiful woman." Brad felt the words begin to build up.

"Lonely, sure, but she must have lived a good life. Face had that look of contentment... kind of quiet dignity if you know what I mean. No marks, scars or anything like that. Never had any reason to be fingerprinted. But hang it all, someone must know her."

The store owner reached forward and laid his tapered hand on Brad's huge fist.

"Not much help for a police officer," he said, "but my little boy say someone does know poor old lady... God."

John Mc Gowan lives in Scarborough, Ont.

Sin is too yeasty to be trivialized

Adrian Peetoom

My boyhood memories would have me believe that many sermons I heard then were filled with kingdom energy and vision. Preaching assured me that I was personally part of a mighty kingdom of God, a kingdom of hope and destiny already visible to eyes of faith.

I'm not talking about every sermon, nor the perfection of even one. I now realize how *male* all preaching was. I, a boy, felt invited to be an active co-shaper of that kingdom. Women, on the other hand, were to be support staff: hewers of wood and carriers of water, at best.

Whatever their shortcomings, few sermons then were trivial, or so I remember. Today I experience many sermons as trivial, especially when it comes to the specifics of sin. I'm perturbed about the frequency of "sin" in sermons coming to mean *sex, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and materialism.* Os Guiness was cited in the March 7 issue of the *Banner* (Christian Reformed weekly) as saying that evangelicals "must have a radical confrontation with and a deeper understanding of negative ideas of the gospel, such as sin..." if they are going to be effective kingdom shapers today. How right he is.

> *Today I experience many sermons as trivial, especially when it comes to the specifics of sin.*

Here are some specific examples.

Last Sunday a visiting preacher illustrated his point by asking us whether we had ever confessed our sin of drinking too much last Friday while already knowing that we would likely do it again next Friday. In an outburst of sharing he told us that he had done just that. My wife emphatically shook her head at this point in the sermon.

Some months ago another visiting preacher shared his lingering guilt feelings for, while a high school student, having accepted the invitation by his seatmate for a few quick beers during a bus stop on a long route.

Please, preachers, scrap the sex-alcohol-materialism examples of sin in your sermons. On all these counts I'm not sufficiently guilty to waste precious sermon time. When I think of sins, I don't think of those. And where I live I'm sure that these four sins are not widespread among my brothers and sisters, either.

Character brokenness

When I think of sin, I think of two major areas. I think first of the subtleties of my character.

The older I get, the more I experience "character" as a vessel of brokenness.

I don't hear much talk about this brokenness (sin) of character, even though I experience it myself. I see much evidence that it exists, in the popularity of "codependency" for instance, and in the bulging appointment books of various psychological counsellors. The world seems full of bewildered people these days, of individuals stuck somewhere in recurring patterns of paralysis and/or misplaced hyperactivity.

I'm not suggesting that all people who need and seek professional help are worse sinners than those who don't need and seek such help. *All* character is a vessel containing sin. But I wonder whether there is a connection between the number of professional help-seekers these days and the now well established tradition of the church pointing to the four sins I mentioned.

By locating sin beyond the pews, pewsitters have not been helped to locate sin within the vessels of their own character. Preachers have been letting pewsitters off the hook. Long-standing church members who come to realize that they are sinners are often surprised at the discovery, while on the face of it they've heard about sin in every church service.

Sins against the ninth commandment

To understand character as the vessel of sin, read the ninth commandment, for instance. It is a major field ripe for confession, as it has been throughout all my life.

Within the church I seldom hear members building up other members in a consistent way. (Of that I'm as guilty as the next person, you understand.) In the community in which I live I also regularly hear expressions of sexism, racism and welfare (poor people) bashing done by church people, all clear violations of the ninth commandment.

The tradition that I was born into is full of people who claim "to say it like it is" - "I'm blunt, that's me." Here "character" becomes an excuse to be unkind, to slur others, to damage through gossip, to label others, to be suspicious even when hearing good things about people.

What seems worse to me is this: special gifts of church members — artists, educated people, newcomers and women — are openly belittled and ridiculed, especially when those exercising those gifts urge changes in congregational life.

I have yet to be part of a congregation whose leadership raises this sin to public consciousness in a consistent and penetrating way. No church council pastoral letter. No repeated mention of it from the pulpit.

Institutional brokenness

But character is not the only container of sin. The culture in which we live is the other.

We live in a time in which institutions are dramatically refashioned in ways we don't understand very well. I hear a lot of church members bemoaning the gap between what family-government-school-church used to be and what it is now. However, when I then engage people in talk about what it was really like "then," it appears that the past wasn't anywhere as "nice" as the stories would have it. I more than suspect that institutions have never been models of graceious living. Whatever historical work I've done has always confirmed that institutions — business, government, family, church, etc. — have their own agendas that tend to run roughshod over individuals.

What makes our age seem different is the sheer volume of quickly shared information about institutional sinning. We can't hide the truth anymore, not even about the past. For instance, we can't hide the truth that the church has more often bought into power institutions than challenged them, ever since the "conversion" of Roman Emperor Constantine.

These days church councils operate more as business managers than as spiritual and cultural visionaries (citing Os Guiness). Visionaries aren't fooled by the appearances of things; they see the rot (and also the promises) below the surface. Businessmen are only interested in the end of the next bottom line period and in keeping control. (There are visionary businessmen, indeed, but they are rare!).

Talk real sins

Character and institution: containers of sin. No need to look outside the church; there's enough rot inside. The Ten Commandments are challenges to the church first. The church leaders and church orthodoxy which Jesus lambasted in the Gospels are "us" as we sit in the pews week after week.

Sins are complex subtleties of self and group that need careful watching. That watching cannot occur if the eyes aren't broken open by preaching that names a spade a shovel, even though it does so in pastoral and tactful terms. Let there be no misunderstanding here: when preachers talk about sin they had better talk about the real sins of people in the pews in front of them. The sinners they usually identify aren't in church!

Ordinary people

How could and should preachers talk about sin from the pulpit?

Let me rephrase the problem by giving you the profile of an ordinary couple.

They may resemble people you know. Their portrait is produced by my imagination, however.

This husband and wife emigrated to Canada in the early 1950s with their two small children.

For the first year they worked for a Canadian farmer. Their loneliness was alleviated only by weekly church services, mostly in the Dutch language.

Once free from their contract obligations, they rented a house without running water and central heating on the edge of town where rents were the lowest. The husband soon found a job, though with low wages. They were soon expecting another child.

However, this husband and wife never failed to put money aside for the church first, and they eagerly joined others in thinking of and planning for a Christian school for their children. To supplement their income they bought a house large enough to have some boarders. Soon their children were old enough to go to that new Christian school, another financial burden they cheerfully accepted.

They are old now but remain who they always were: simple, faithful, solid, loyal neighbors and fellow church members. They don't drink much: he has given up smoking (she never indulged); they have remained faithful to and still love each other. They don't do drugs, of course, and the last house they bought is now truly their home — neat, full of memories, with a flourishing garden and time to enjoy it. Some winters they take a trip to Florida. They still go to church twice on Sunday (some of their children don't anymore).

Would you please tell me how these two fine people sin today? Their morality is clearly in good shape. My guess is that they look back upon their lives with some measure of satisfaction, a satisfaction framed by a gratitude to God in whose paths they have tried to walk all their lives, to be sure. Who would begrudge them their

Continued on p.12...

EDUCATION

Alyce Oosterhuis

Bonding

We buried our stepmother last month on the one day that the sun shone gloriously and Ontario embodied the promise of forthcoming spring. She had been our mother for more than 30 years and her death provided us with the opportunity to affirm our family bonds in a togetherness at her grave site.

After the funeral we experienced these same bonds as we sorted through faded photographs, letters from our childhoods, documents pertaining to birth, death, taxes and property. Her death afforded us children a reprieve of memories and love in our otherwise too busy schedules of life tasks.

Sitting in my education foundations class this morning, while listening to one group's presentation and another group's planning of their presentation, I was struck by the many layers of bonds we experience in the course of a lifetime. The groups in this class selected themselves for topical presentations only two months ago, yet here they talk to and with each other as if they were siblings with long histories of shared memories and experience. Each group has forged its own identity and I am impressed with the uniqueness and character of each group.

Ties that comfortably bind

Although much is being written today about the infant/parent bond as crucial for healthy emotional development, my two different bonding perceptions of the last week, suggest that there are many avenues for building the ties that bind. Common histories, goals, tasks and crises demand that we lay aside our self-centred interests to look to that which is shared. And in the mutual looking, recalling and working we forget our differences so we can concentrate on that which binds. My siblings and I experienced a level of mutual tolerance and forgiveness that is frequently not present in our family affairs. My class groups expressed a willingness to listen and share at a time when competition for grades and individual achievement is uppermost in students' minds.

It is no wonder that class and family reunions are often such emotionally high affairs. Whenever we are able to lay aside, if only for a moment, that which tends to drive us into frenzied individualized activity, we sense a reprieve from being "in this world" to recall primarily the best that has been.

In a real way, we have the opportunity to experience such reprieves and renewed bonds every Sunday, extended holiday or vacation period. Such moments of togetherness ought to bind and bring out the best in us. When those moments fail to be the necessary reprieve, it is probably because we did not feel the tug of bonds that bind.

For my class, I hope that throughout their college years there will be many moments of laying aside individual differences. For my family, I hope that the bonding can be felt many times before another funeral calls us together.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches at The King's University College in Edmonton, and is very bonded with her students.

Outcry forces U.S. Congress to clarify education bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — An education proposal that could have led to government regulation of private, parochial and home school teachers was voted down Feb. 24 after a nationwide outcry that jammed Capitol Hill phones for weeks.

At issue was a one-sentence provision in the 700-page "Improving America's Schools Act" (HR6). That provision would have required school districts to institute a subject-by-subject certification program for all teachers in schools under their "jurisdiction." Critics said the requirement was so vaguely defined that it could be interpreted to include non-public schools.

Supporters of the measure insisted that it would not apply to non-public schools, yet an amendment proposed by Rep. Dick Armey (R-Tex.) specifically excluding such schools failed to win support in the House of Representatives.

After Armey's amendment failed, the Virginia-based Home School Legal Defense Association alerted its supporters to the possible threat to private education. Congressional offices were deluged with hundreds of thousands of calls, letters and faxes from constituents — more than on any other recent issue, including the Gulf War.

Avoid 'government control'

Reacting to the outcry, Congress passed by a 424-1 vote an amendment by Rep. William Ford (D-Mich.) which stripped the provision from the bill and added language explicitly exempting "religious" and home schools. The House then approved Armey's amendment as well by a vote of 374-53. Armey's amendment says: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to permit, allow, encourage or authorize any federal control over any aspect of private, religious or home schools that does not receive funds or does not participate in programs or services under this Act."

In the meantime, Gary Bauer, who was undersecretary of education under Reagan and who is now president of a conservative group called the Family Research Council, has been urging Americans to oppose increased "federal control of education."

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Can you relate to these sins?

....continued from page 11

positive memories?

And yet we know that sin was abundant in their lives. The Word of God, which after all is far more powerful than all the preaching they have heard all their lives, has convicted them of sin. But *what* sins? How well has the church taught them to be specific, to know the proper words that point to the specific sore spots of character and institution?

Trivializing grace

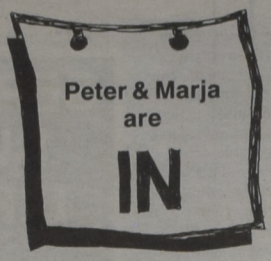
I'm not suggesting that sin is a list of items. Sin is a complex combination of obvious, and often public, deeds and absences of deeds, all seasoned with motives, ambitions, choices and hesitations. Sin is mysterious.

We shall always know of its yeasty existence better than our words can precisely describe them. It's that mystery, that yeastiness, which makes sin not fixable, not even by hardworking Dutch Calvinists. Sin refuses to be boxed in, for instance, by traditions and "the way it used to be."

However, the most important consequence of preachers making sin trivial through their examples is that they then make God's grace trivial as well. If sin isn't much, how can grace be? If sin is not really *mine* (in all its concrete strangeness), then how can grace be? If sin isn't the stuff of the enslavement of my character and environment (institutions), how can grace be a liberating force?

When I think of my sins in the area of alcohol-drugs-sex-material goods, my thoughts are of trivia. When I think of my sins as characters, and institutionally as husband, father, brother, son, friend, colleague, citizen and brother in Christ the word trivia does not easily come to mind. Of late the church has not much helped me to see those specific sins.

Adrian Peetoom is an educational writer and editor (for the time being) who lives in Chatham, Ont., (for the time being).



Dear P & M:

My wife has had several miscarriages and this has caused severe emotional and spiritual strain, mostly unacknowledged by others, including me, her husband. We lost a child each time. Other mothers — and fathers — have told me of the pain they experienced.

Churches have not found a way of channeling the mourning process following the death of the unborn. Do you think it would be good to institute a practice in our churches of having a brief memorial service, or even a burial, as we have for others who have died?

Dear Grieving for Your Unborn Children:

In 1992 CRC Publications published "In Life and In Death," a pastoral guide for funerals written and compiled by Leonard J. Vander Zee. To our happy surprise we discovered that it contains a beautiful service of prayer on the occasion of a miscarriage, stillborn child or early death.

The introduction to this service recognizes that a miscarriage is an occasion of deep grief that can be overlooked by family and church members. This funeral sourcebook suggests a brief service of prayer at home with the grieving family, close relatives and friends when a funeral is not appropriate.

Many pastors may not be aware that this type of liturgy is available. We've read through the service and judge it to be an extremely sensitive resource for this private grief. Although Peter has never been asked to lead such a service, he foresees suggesting it if and when he becomes aware of these situations in the future.

Your letter acknowledges that a miscarriage represents the loss of a real child. We affirm the importance of giving the unborn this identity. One of the suggested prayers of the service does this especially well and we would like to quote it in full:

Lord, we do not understand why this little one which we had hoped to bring into the world has died before birth. We only know that where once there was sweet expectation now there is bitter disappointment; where once there was hope and excitement, now there is a feeling of failure and loss. Nothing can replace this life, this child, whom we have loved before seeing, before feeling it stir in the womb. In our pain we look to you, Lord to whom no life is meaningless, no matter how brief or small. Though our understanding may be limited, may it not confine our faith. Draw us close to you and to each other in our grief. Heal our wounds and comfort our sorrows, and raise us all from death to life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We read the article you enclosed about the Japanese rituals that help a woman come to terms with both spontaneous and induced abortions. Of course, we can't agree with the way Buddhist parents memorialize and/or apologize to the spirit of the fetus. We can, however, appreciate the way in which that culture takes seriously the feelings of grief surrounding the death of an unborn child. From this we can learn that no one should feel foolish about going through a grieving process after a miscarriage. No husband, relative or friend should minimize the emotional and spiritual trauma that accompanies this particular loss.

Because of your letter many couples will, we hope, embrace and comfort each other today because you have made them sensitive to the real pain that was often pushed aside in the past. We encourage couples and pastors to make use of this brief service of prayer in the intimacy of their homes when the need or the desire is expressed. Perhaps today's advice will also prevent family members and friends from brusquely brushing aside the real feelings of loss that accompany a miscarriage.

Write to: P & M
c/o Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Tom Zeyl, Irene Bom, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Colombia is a Christian, violent country

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — One of the most violent countries in the world, Colombia, has been a Christian nation for centuries and the Catholic Church is still a dominant force. Doesn't the Christian faith have something to say about morality and justice?

Yes it does, says Colombia's Father Javier Giraldo, head of the Interchurch Congregational Commission on Justice and Peace. But under extreme conditions some people make decisions simply on the basis of survival. Some share their faith within a community, like base communities. Often they testify powerfully about what is going on. Last year a small book was published about the lives of 30 Christian martyrs in Colombia. They were stories of peace and justice, he says.

When the first indigenous priest was ordained, he wanted to place his life in the hands of the people who have suffered much. He questioned the tradition that at baptism the poor people seek godparents who are elite, wealthy landowners, who then expect their godchildren to work for free on their plantations. He helped the people seek godparents among the poor.

This brought great oppression from the landowners. The people began to be pressured by military and paramilitary groups. The priest's sister was killed, and his parents were injured. Then he was killed.

The suggestion is made that those who criticize the government are communists. The government is ordained by God, and to fight communism is your Christian duty.

The church hierarchy in Colombia is among the most conservative in Latin America, says Giraldo. Bishops choose to avoid confrontations with government, even when pressured by churches.

But the situation is changing, he adds. Now about 10 bishops have taken different positions and are close to people who suffer. They have made very brave denunciations in recent years and have received death threats.

The bishop's conference is concerned about internal refugees in Colombia and has recently published a strong document on human rights.

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JOHN and ANNA VANDER PLOEG
(nee MIEDEMA)

will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. As children and grandchildren we praise God for blessing us with these special God-fearing parents and grandparents.

Congratulations and best wishes from us:

Florence & Tom Ingerson — Tinley Park, Ill.
Agnes & Beau Cruz — Carol Stream, Ill.
Stuart & RoseMarie Vander Ploeg — Shallow Lake, Ont.
Wesley & Glenda Vander Ploeg — Owen Sound, Ont.
Clifford & Marilyn Vander Ploeg — New Dundee, Ont.
Tom & Pat Vander Ploeg — Calgary, Alta.
Janice Vander Ploeg — Stoney Creek, Ont.
Glenn & Rhonda Vander Ploeg — Owen Sound, Ont.
Edward & Jennifer Vander Ploeg — Shallow Lake, Ont.
Richard Vander Ploeg & Tania Henderson — Owen Sound, Ont.
Harold Vander Ploeg — Shallow Lake, Ont.

along with 15 grandchildren.

An open house will be held on Saturday, April 23, 1994, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at their residence, R.R. #1, Shallow Lake, ON N0H 2K0, Phone: (519) 376-8344.

Best wishes only.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Peter and Willemina Schep (nee Mourik) on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary!

Anniversaries

Nieuwerkerk Alliston
a/d IJssel Ontario
1939 April 20 1994

With joy and thankfulness to our God, we hope to celebrate, D.V., the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

PETER and WILLEMINA SCHEP
(nee MOURIK)

We pray that the Lord may continue to keep you both in His loving care, and give you strength for each new day, as He has in the past.

Wedding text: Psalm 73:23.

With love from your children:

Arie & Judy Schep — Guelph
Debbie & Arnold, Suzanne, Robin & Michael
Willy & Ralph Hollema — Alliston
Rick & Brandie, Harry, Christine, Peter, Elaine
Diane & John Van Campen — Utopia
Audrey, Maureen, Mark, Jonathan, Jeff
Nelly & John Geddes — London
Jenny, Carrie
Janet & Ted Vandevis — Barrie
Brad, Karen
Betty Ann & Don Duggan — Alliston
Amanda, Sacha, Michael

and four great-grandchildren.

We invite you to celebrate with us at an open house on Saturday, April 23, 1994, from 8-10 p.m., at the Alliston Chr. Ref. Church, 28 Downey Ave., Alliston, Ont.

Home address: 358 Albert Street East, Alliston, ON L9R 1J8

Anniversaries

Emmen Kitchener
1949 April 26 1994

Wedding text: "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1a).

With praise and thanksgiving to God for His gracious care over them, we celebrate with joy the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

HENRY and GERDA BOUWERS
(nee DEJONGE)

With all our love,
Gerry — Richmond, B.C.
Trudy & John — Kitchener
Len & Pat — Brampton
Diana & Dave — Kitchener
Grandma and Grandpa (Oma and Opa) of 13 grandchildren.

Friends and relatives are invited to an open house at their home from 7 to 9 p.m., on April 26, 1994.

Best wishes only please.

Home address: 148 Rennie Drive, Kitchener, ON N2A 1J6

Obituaries

Beilen Townsend
March 20, 1916 March 21, 1994

The Lord took into his mansion of glory his child

HENNY (HELEN) VANDOORN-MOES

The knowledge that she is with the Lord is a comfort for her children, grandchildren, sister and brother

Gerry & Marilyn VanDoorn — Caledonia
Mike, Michelle, Chris
John & Helen VanDoom — Caledonia
Anne & Jaco, Kelly, Melissa, Laura, John
Henry & Caroline VanDoorn — Caledonia
Tanya, Jody
Rose & Gary Meyer — Cayuga
Joey, Danny, Katey
Harry & Mary Moes — Australia
John & Sherley Moes — Australia
Bart & Auk Moes — Australia
Alice & Cor Bod — St. Thomas
Albert & Anne Moes — Kincardine
Klaas & Bertha Moes — Mt. Brydges
Ralph (predeceased) & Ann Moes — London
Bill (predeceased) & Nel Moes — Oshawa

nieces and nephews.

Funeral service was held on March 24, 1994, in the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, York, Ont., Revs. John Postuma, Riemer Praamsma and Tom Vais officiating.

Obituaries

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Is. 40:31).

Suddenly the Lord has taken to be with Him, our dearly loved brother and brother-in-law

WILLEM TIMMERMAN

at the age of 74.

He will be sadly missed by his wife Klasina tenKate and his children.

Predeceased by his brother Hendrik.

Grace Keizer — Wellandport
Marie Timmerman — Hoogeveen, the Neth.
Janna & Tinus Maat — Ruinerwold, the Neth.
Margje & Roelof Keizer — Ruinerwold, the Neth.
Willy & Henk Janssen — Brampton.

Psalm 121.

Look for Peter and Marja on page 13...

Classifieds

For Rent

APARTMENT AVAILABLE — very close to the Western University and King's College campuses in London, Ont., from **May 1 - Sept. 1, 1994**. Two-bedroom $400 monthly.
Call (613) 838-3235

Available May 1, 1994, **small apartment**, suitable for student, in the Carlton-Dorchester Blvd. area of St. Catharines, Ont.
Call (905) 646-2845

For rent **1-bedroom apartment**. Fridge, stove, airconditioning, heat and hydro included. $400 a month, **Hamilton**, Ont. On Wentworth South, on bus route.
Call (905) 522-7545

For Sale

Pleasure or Profit
Rubber stamp shop supplies for sale in South-Western Ontario. Owner retiring. Ideal for starting a small business. Great as a hobby, too! Included are blocks, handles, rubber, pads, drill, press, cabinets, logos, etc. Make a deal! If you are interested, write to: **File #2617, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Personal

WHY NOT?
The **Christian Marriage Contact Service** assists men and women in the USA and Canada who would like to marry or remarry.
Why not write to us at C.M.C.S.? Enclose $3.00 for our information package.
P.O. Box 93090
Burlington, Ontario, Canada
L7M 4A3
More male members are encouraged to apply.

Teachers

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Durham Chr. High School invites applicants for **possible openings** in **history** and **French**. Send application to:
Durham Chr. High School
Att.: Ren Siebenga, Principal
R.R. #1, Bowmanville, ON
L1C 3K2
Phone: (905) 623-3487

Teachers

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Knox Chr. School anticipates an opening at the **primary level** for the 1994-95 school year. Please forward letter of application and resume to:
Mr. W.M. Helmus, Principal
410 Scugog St., R.R. 1
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Phone: (905) 623-5871
Fax: (905) 623-8877

BURNS LAKE, B.C.: Burns Lake Chr. School is seeking **three teachers** to take up the challenge of helping our school develop its potential in its second year of operation. Our school has multi-grade classrooms for primary/elementary grades, plus Kindergarten.
Please contact us at:
Burns Lake Chr. School
Box 574
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.: Immanuel Chr. School invites applications from teachers for **Grades 1** and **6** for the 1994/1995 school term. Please forward all letters of inquiry and application to:
Mr. H. Konynenbelt, Principal
Immanuel Chr. School
802-6 Avenue North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 0S1
Phone: (403) 328-4782 or 328-4783

PORT ALBERNI, VANCOUVER ISLAND, B.C.: The Port Alberni Chr. School Association invites B.C. certified applicants for a **K-7 (full-time) teaching position** in a new interdenominational school to begin Sept. 94. Please send resumes, including Christian philosophy statement to:
Marcus Slotiuk, PACSA
Site 122, C-11
Port Alberni, BC
V9Y 7L5
Phone: (604) 724-4088
Fax: (604) 723-1030

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.: The Association for Christian Education of Prince George invites applications for a teaching position in **Primary (Grade K-3)** preferably with a French and/or P.E. specialty and in **Junior/Secondary (Grade 8-10)** a generalist position with emphasis on English and fine arts.
Please send resumes, including a Christian Education Philosophy statement to:
Cedars Chr. School
701 N. Nechako Rd.
Prince George, BC V2K 1A2
Attention: Hiring Committee
Fax: (604) 564-0729

Teachers

1994-1995

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alta.: Rocky Chr. School is soliciting applicants for a **Grade 6 position**. Being able to teach some physical education in Junior High will be an asset. We are also looking for a **half-time teachers aid**. Rocky Chr. School is an interdenominational school with approximately 175 students. Anyone interested in joining a dynamic dedicated staff of teachers can forward their resume and transcripts to:
Mr. William Slofstra, Principal
5204-54 Avenue
Rocky Mountain House, AB
T0M 1T3
Phone: (403) 845-3516 (school)
(403) 845-5598 (home)

WASAGA BEACH, Ont.: Silvercrest Chr. School has a **definite opening** in the **upper elementary level, possible opening** in the **primary level** and a **definite part-time French position**. Silvercrest is a non-denominational Christian school located in Wasaga Beach, Ont. We are looking for Christian individuals who feel called to serve Christ in an educational setting. Inquiries should be sent to:
Mr. Greg Ayrheart, Principal
Silvercrest Chr. School
380 Zoo Park Road
Wasaga Beach, ON L0L 2P0
or call: (705) 429-4303
or fax (705) 445-9626

WOODSTOCK, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School invites applications for a **possible Grade 1 teaching position** (50%), mornings only, for the 1994-95 school year. **Experience or interest with learning resource programs is an asset.** Please send letter of application and resume to:
Mr. Andy Bouma, interim Principal
John Knox Chr. School
Box 243
800 Juliana Drive
Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8
Phone: (519) 539-1492

van der Woerd
LAW OFFICE
David A. van der Woerd B.A., LL.B.
20 Jackson Street West, Suite 512, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 1L2
Tel. (905) 577-6205 Fax (905) 577-9498

Summer Job Market

University student in biology and environmental studies (25 years old), seeking summer employment in Niagara region. Six years secretarial experience, WordPerfect, PlanPerfect, DataPerfect, spreadsheet, AccPac, multi-lingual.
Please call 682-9068 (evenings)

If you believe that honesty and integrity far outweigh political correctness, please read the following ad: **RBC student looking for summer employment** paying "Big Bucks". Willing to work hard for it. Tuition isn't cheap these days! Call Tim at:
(616) 669-9859 before May 7
(905) 934-3547 after May 7

19-year old college-bound male seeking summer job. Available June 25. Willing to do indoor or outdoor work, ranging from coalminer to astronaut. **Call Fred at (905) 383-0119** in **Hamilton**, Ont.

Alison Seinen, student at Calvin College looking for summer employment. Have had experience working with children, but am willing to consider any possibilities. **(616) 954-4929.**

Paula Wubbenhorst (17 years old). Experience includes cash register operation, keyboarding and desktop publishing. Seeking employment in any of these areas. **Call (905) 826-2504.**

16-year old St. Catharines student eager to work during summer months. Experienced babysitter but will consider any type of work. Please call Renee Numan at **(905) 937-6046.**

Summer Job Market

Student graduating with Honours Economics degree, Willowdale, Ont., looking for summer employment in business or finance, but will work at anything. Lawn maintenance experience. **Call (416) 221-3396.**

17-year old diesel technician student seeking employment on a dairy farm. Experienced in haying, worked on pig farm, and have worked in automotive and small engine fields. Own car. Adaptable, eager to work hard anywhere. **Call Chris Van Dixhoorn, Cambridge, (519) 623-9924.**

Miscellaneous

Summer Job Market

Attention: All Students

We know that many of you are thinking about summer jobs at this time.
As in previous years, *Christian Courier* will carry the Summer Job Market section in the Classifieds. We urge you to check this section until **May 27**.

Send us your announcement, and include name, age, address, phone number, experience and type of work you are seeking. This service is free of charge. We have only one request: Please cancel the ad as soon as you have found employment so that you don't use up valuable space needlessly.

Good job hunting!

Stan de Jong
Manager

Classifieds

For Sale	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

CONTENT
DIGITAL SAMPLING COMPUTER ORGAN
FOR CHURCHES AND HOMES

For info. or your nearest dealer, please call (905) 455-0797

THE MUSIC GROUP
190 Highway #7 West (Bypass), Unit 5, Brampton, Ontario L7A 1A2

Part-time regional reporter

Christian Courier is looking for a part-time regional reporter in southern British Columbia. The assignment involves writing two or three news stories a month about people or events that are significant and of interest to the Reformed/Christian community. This is an exciting assignment for someone who enjoys writing and keeping abreast of events and doesn't mind picking up a phone. Journalistic training and experience preferred. **Please apply to Bert Witvoet, editor.**

Look for our Vacation Issue next week...

ZINGEND GELOVEN
Saturdays at 8 a.m. CHIN FM 101
P.O.Box 274 West Hill, Ont. M1E 4R5

Vacations	Vacations

Miscellaneous

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Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for its Dutch hospitality. Reasonable rates for cottage rentals. Excellent for camping, swimming and fishing (ideal for group camping). "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy. 11, on Hwy. 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.

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Little Europe Resort, R.R. 3, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X1
Phone: (705) 645-2738

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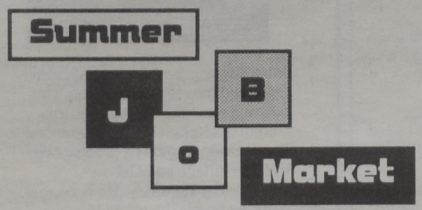
Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

Job Opportunities

Hire a student!



This summer why not hire a student to help you ease your workload and get some extra things done? Beginning March 25, students will advertise their skills in our Summer Job Market section of the Classifieds. Please consider hiring one of them.

Some students may be hired when you call them. Please be patient. Sometimes they are hired before we can cancel their ad.

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Many magazines and tabloids in Canada are struggling and C C is no exception! If each subscriber would gain us **one** new subscriber before the end of May 1994, we would, in one wonderful swoop, be where we were 10 years ago. Look around you — you'll see signs of new life everywhere. Why not blossom with the lilacs and hatch with the robins? Convince only **one** person or **one** family that **Christian Courier** is worth subscribing to. Send us this coupon today and we will send you a copy of **Building on the Rock**, Rev. Henry Van Andel's insightful meditations on Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

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❑ Please send Rev. Van Andel's book to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov./State: _____ Code: _____

Clip this out and send to:
Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Classifieds

Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous

shalom manor

DIRECTOR OF CARE

Shalom Manor, a 132-bed Christian ethnic long-term care facility, is currently looking for someone to fill the position of Director of Care.

The applicant for this position must have:
- a current certificate of competence with the College of Nurses of Ontario
- post R.N. Education in Gerontology, including diploma or certificate courses
- a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in a similar long-term care facility
- a demonstrated skill in managing a nursing team, and
- the ability to communicate in the Dutch language.

A B.Sc.N. degree or LTCOM certificate would be desirable. The successful applicant will start in **June 1994.**
Send full resume, before **April 25, 1994**, to:

Administrator, Shalom Manor
12 Bartlett Avenue, Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5
Phone: (905) 945-9631, Fax (905) 945-1211

CRWRC

CRWRC-Canada requires a temporary (6 months) full-time person to co-ordinate our communications activity, beginning **June 1994.**

Applicants should possess creative writing and communication skills and an understanding of layout and design. A sound biblical perspective and a concern for the poor are important qualities.
A degree in a communications field is required. Send applications, by **April 29, 1994**, to:

Ray Elgersma, Director, CRWRC-Canada
Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

Seeking a Pastor

The **Christian Reformed Church** of **Georgetown, Ont.**, is seeking an ordained pastor to work in team ministry, leading us in preaching, teaching and pastoral care, with proven ability for and commitment to youth ministry. A church profile is available upon request. Contact the **Calling Committee, Georgetown Chr. Ref. Church, P.O. Box 45, Georgetown, ON L7G 4T1.**

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls received:

— to Grace, Chatham, Ont., Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema of Guelph, Ont.

— to Millbrook, Grand Rapids, Mich., Rev. Martin Vellekoop of Pembroke, Ont.

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
210 Clarke St. N.
Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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Church _____

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2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49560

John, our Banner editor

John Suk was born in St. Catharines, Ont., and moved to Brampton, Ont., where he went to Toronto District Christian High School. He attended Dordt College and is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. He is currently working on his doctorate in communications. Before becoming Banner editor, John taught English at Durham Christian High School in Bowmanville, Ont., then pastored churches in Sarnia, Ont., and Ann Arbor, Mich. He is married and has two children.

Save money by using the

CLASSIFIEDS!

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The Canadian Red Cross Society

Classifieds/Events

Events	Events	Events	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities

Calendar

April 15-16 John Calvin Chr. School (Strathroy) invitational hockey tournament at the Tri-Township Arena, **Mt. Brydges**, Ont. Teams from Calvin, Calvin Alumni, Dordt Alumni, Strathroy, Redeemer, Mt. Brydges, Sarnia, Ancaster and Burlington. Bring the whole family! Proceeds to Christian education.

April 16 Mary Rice Hopkins in concert, 6 p.m., Jubilee Fellowship CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Tickets $6 p.p. Info.: (905) 892-6434.

April 16 "Spring Praise Concert" by the Hamilton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and the "Soli Deo Gloria Choir" (central Niagara CRCs), at 7:30 p.m., Bethany CRC, **Fenwick**, Ont. Info.: (905) 892-6659 or 892-2140.

April 16 Spring concert by Leendert Kooij's OCMA, with Andre Knevel at the organ. At 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Belleville**, Ont. Proceeds for World Missions. Tickets: (613) 969-1478/966-5898.

April 16 Conference on "Alcoholism & ohter drug addictions," at Zion Chr. Ref. Church, **Oshawa**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Rich Grevengoed on "Family Disease - Family Recovery." Eight workshops. Register before April 4 with Jane de Haan, (905) 679-6490. Coffee and registration at 8:30 a.m.

April 16 Concert by "The Ambassadors" male chorus, 7:30 p.m., CRC, **Rochester**, N.Y. (2750 Atlantic Ave., Penfield). For Christian Heritage Homes.

April 16 Annual spring concert by a 130-voice massed choir, directed by Andrew Bouma, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Woodstock**, Ont. Also featuring: guest organist Jan Overduin and the London District Chr. High School chamber choir.

April 17-19 Annual convention of the Canadian Church Press at Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre, **Mississauga**, Ont. Info.: (416) 960-8500.

April 20 Spring concert by Leendert Kooij's OCMA, with Andre Knevel at the organ. Proceeds for Heritage Chr. School. At 8 p.m., Cambridge St. United Church, **Lindsay**, Ont. Tickets: (705) 324-9582.

April 20 Redeemer College's closing convocation for its 12th academic year at 10:30 a.m., at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Doug Loney. All welcome!

April 22-24 "Faithfulness Today III" conference at Hamilton Convention Centre, 115 King St. W., **Hamilton**, Ont. Keynote speaker: Alister McGrath. Theme: "In the world... not of the world." Info.: (905) 318-9244 or 1-800-465-7186.

April 22-24 40th Anniversary West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta. Info.: (403) 486-4360.

April 23 Organ concert by Andre Knevel, 7:30 p.m., Westmount CRC, **Strathroy**, Ont. Free admission and refreshments. Sponsored by Strathroy Plymouth/Chrysler.

April 23 "Festival of Praise," featuring 7 Ontario male choruses, Wim van Suydam (organ) and Henk-Jan & Herman Drost (trumpets), at 7:30 p.m., Yorkminster Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St., **Toronto**, Ont. Admission: $10 p.p., $7.50 seniors/students.

April 23 Christian Rainbows — sponsored meeting for the family and friends of the long-term mentally ill. Speaker: Dr. Grant Mullen on "Can a Christian be depressed or hyperactive?" From 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Ebenezer Can. Ref. Church, Dynes Rd., **Burlington**, Ont. Info.: (905) 639-1075 or (519) 631-0307.

April 23 Choir/organ concert with the "Con Spirito Choir" (John Kaldeway, director), accompanied by Laurens Kaldeway. At 8 p.m., Free Reformed Church, **Chatham**, Ont. Tickets: (519) 383-0438.

April 23 The "Georgetown Choral Society," soloists and orchestra (Mr. A. Dale Wood, director), will perform Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Requiem" and other choral works. At 8 p.m., St. Paul's United Church, **Brampton**, Ont. Also on Sunday, April 24, at Holy Cross RC Church, **Georgetown**, Ont. Tickets: (905) 459-3913 or at the door.

April 23-24 The "Georgetown Choral Society," soloists and orchestra, directed by Mr. A. Dale Wood, will perform Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Requiem" and other choral works. **April 23:** 8 p.m., St. Paul's United Church, **Brampton**, Ont.; **April 24:** 8 p.m., Holy Cross RC Church, **Georgetown**, Ont. Tickets: (905) 459-3913 or at the door.

April 25-May 4 CSS's Harry Houtman in Alberta.

April 27 Spring concert by Leendert Kooij's OCMA, with Andre Knevel, organist. Benefit concert for "Homestead." At 8 p.m., Melrose United Church (Homewood & Locke), **Hamilton**, Ont. Tickets: (905) 389-3510.

April 28 "TDCH Alumni Association" holds its first meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Toronto District Chr. High School, **Woodbridge**, Ont. All alumni and past/present staff are invited! Info.: (416) 741-2273 or (905) 851-1772.

April 28-30 "Street Level," a national conference for Christian street workers. Contact Victoria Drysdale, Yonge St. Mission, 270 Gerrard St. E., **Toronto**, ON M5A 2G4. Phone: (416) 929-9614.

April 29 Spring concert by the Strathroy mixed choir "Rejoice in the Lord," directed by Jack Dykstra, at 7:30 p.m., Westmount CRC, **Strathroy**, Ont. Special guest: pianist Joseph VanBeek. Freewill offering.

April 30 The King's University College 8th graduation convocation, 2 p.m., West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta. Guest speaker: Dr. Brian Stiller, Exec. Dir. of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

May 5 25th Anniversary of the North Edmonton Chr. School, **Edmonton**, Alta. Anniversary program on May 5. Pig Roast & reunion on June 3.

May 18 Mini convention celebrating 40th anniversary of the Bowmanville-Quinte-Ottawa region of the Can. Fed. of Chr. Ref. Women, at 9:15 a.m., Days Inn, **Kingston**, Ont. Speakers: Dr. Willis Van Groningen and Rev. Devona Wiederick. Tickets $16. Order by May 1 from S. Tadema (613) 384-3431.

May 20-23 Young Calvinist Federation's 20th anniversary all-Ontario convention, hosted by Niagara League, at Brock University, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Info.: Tina VanGeest (905) 892-1429.

May 20-24 "Reformed Engaged Encounter" weekend at the Pearce Williams Christian Centre, **Iona Station**, Ont. Info.: (905) 935-6875.

May 28 Graduation ceremonies, 2 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Speaker: Dr. John Redekop on "What makes a college Christian." President Rev. Henry R. De Bolster will also be recognized.

June 6-10 "Milk & Honey Summer Festival," a Christian vacation experience focussing on the theme, "Not by Bread Alone." At Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Call Janet at (905) 648-2131.

June 8 Twenty-fifth anniversary "Hollandse Dag." 10 a.m., Community Centre, **Moorefield**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. L. Schaafsma. Take your own lunch and cup along!

June 23-26 "Canadian Christian Festival IV," at Copps Coliseum, **Hamilton**, Ont. Theme: "Sharing the Joy." Speakers include: George Carey, James Forbes Jr., David Mainse, Jean Vanier (Founder of L'Arche) and Lois Wilson. Info.: (905) 523-3100.

June 25 Christians across Canada participate in "A Day to Change the World," as part of the "Global March for Jesus." Watch for local announcements. Info.: (416) 778-7080.

Cedars Christian School

Prince George, B.C.
invites applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL

to assume responsibilities starting the 1994/95 school year

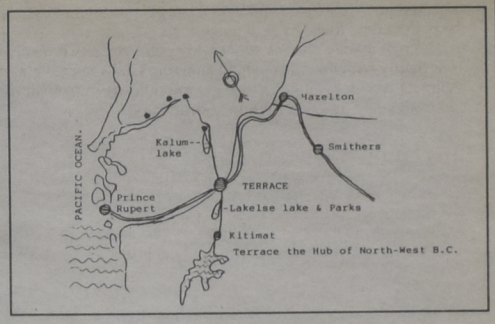
Cedars Christian school provides Christian education from preschool to Grade 10 in an interdenominational setting and will be moving to add Grades 11 and 12 in the near future. High school experience preferred.

Please send resumes, including a Christian Education Philosophy statement, to:
Board President
Cedars Christian School
701 North Nechako Rd.
Prince George, BC V2K 1A2
Phone: (604) 564-0707; Fax: (604) 564-0729

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH TERRACE, B.C.

During the summer our worship services are at 10:30 a.m., and 6:30 p.m.



If you are travelling through or vacationing in beautiful Northwest B.C., we invite you to worship with us. CRC ministers who are willing to preach during our pastor's study leave (June 12 and 19) or vacation (Aug. 7 thru Sept. 5) are invited to contact us.

Ed de Walle, Pres. (604) 635-2092
Jan Lok, V.P. (604) 635-7795
Fax: (604) 638-7635

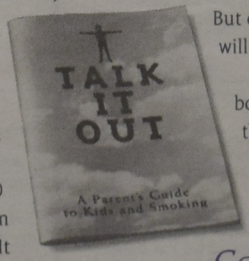
Postcards requested

The **Clayburn Hills Campus** of the **Abbotsford Christian School** is currently working on an all-school Canada project. The 406 students at the school are learning about other communities in Canada. To help them in this endeavour, they are requesting postcards from individuals or groups across the nation. A short note explaining something about your community would be helpful. Please address your postcard to: **Abbotsford Christian School, Clayburn Hills Campus, Box 280, Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N8.**

To smoke or not to smoke. It's a decision all children must make. And, given the daily pressures of fitting in, it's by no means an easy one. But just because they must decide for themselves doesn't mean they have to be on their own.

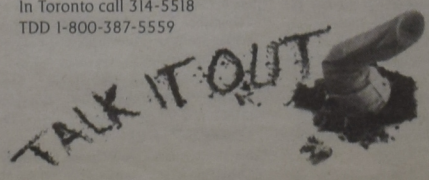
Talk to your kids. Point out that tobacco is a major cause of lung disease, heart disease and cancer. Every year in Ontario, it costs us 13,000 loved ones – most of whom got hooked in their teens. It also costs us all $3 billion a year in such things as health care and lost work time.

It's a perfect time to share these ideas. Because right now your children are seeing and hearing a province-wide anti-smoking campaign. So you can bet it's on their minds. But of all the messages they receive, none will deliver more impact than yours.



To prepare for your talk, call for this booklet. Encourage your children. Give them the confidence they need to make the right choice. And you'll have been there for them after all.

Call 1-800-268-1154
In Toronto call 314-5518
TDD 1-800-387-5559



Ministry of Health
Ontario